

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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COME-00 EB-08 FRB-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-15
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FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5834
INFO AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

UNCLAS FREETOWN 2415

DEPARTMENT PASS AID/W

MONROVIA ALSO FOR AID

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: ECON LI SL

SUBJECT: FOURTH MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE MANO RIVER UNION

1. SUMMARY: THE FOURTH MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE MANO RIVER UNION WAS HELD IN FREETOWN ON JULY 13, 1977. DISCUSSIONS CENTERED ON BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR FY 1977-78 AND PROPOSALS FOR NEW UNION PROJECTS.

2. THE DRAFT BUDGET FOR UNION OPERATIONS OF LE1,956,456 TOGETHER WITH AN ADDITIONAL LE1,259,471 FOR NEW PROJECTS WAS PRESENTED TO THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL. MEMBER STATES WILL CONTRIBUTE LE1,273,270 TO THE OPERATING DRAFT BUDGET AND A POSSIBLE LE155,494 FOR NEW PROJECTS.

3. NEW PROJECTS IN THE DRAFT BUDGET INCLUDE UNION MARINE TRAINING, UNION SCHOLARSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP, AND UNION TRAINING AND RESEARCH BOARD PROGRAMS. THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC
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COMMUNITY, THE NETHERLANDS GOVERNMENT AND THE REPUBLIC OF GERMANY HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN SUPPORTING THESE AND OTHER MANO RIVER UNION PROGRAMS.

4. THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT IS DISCUSSING WITH THE UNION THE CONSTRUCTION OF A HIGHWAY WHICH WOULD MEET INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS. THE PROPOSED HIGHWAY WOULD BE FROM BO TO THE MANO

RIVER BRIDGE PASSING THROUGH ZIMMI, EXACT ROUTING REMAINS TO BE DETERMINED AS DO CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICATIONS.

5. DR. CYRIL BRIGHT SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNION IS EXPECTED TO RETIRE AT THE END OF THIS CALENDAR YEAR. DR. BRIGHT HAS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNION SINCE 1974. COMMENTING ON THE UNION'S PROGRESS, DR. BRIGHT INDICATED THAT THE UNION NOW HAS AN EFFECTIVE FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTING PROJECTS OF ECONOMIC BENEFIT TO THE NATIONS INVOLVED.

6. MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE UNION INCLUDE A) HARMONIZATION OF IMPORT DUTIES ON ABOUT 95 PERCENT OF ITEMS CONTAINED IN THE CUSTOMS COOPERATION COUNCIL TARRIFF NOMENCLATURE, B) LIBERALIZATION OF MUTUAL TRADE IN GOODS OF LOCAL ORIGIN AND C) SUPPORTING MEASURES FOR DEVELOPING COOPERATION IN THE PRODUCTION OF AGRICULTURAL AND MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS OF LOCAL ORIGIN.

7. IN A RECENT MEETING WITH EMBOFF DR. BRIGHT AGAIN REITERATED HIS HOPE THAT THE USG WOULD SUPPORT THE UNION WITH FINANCIAL AND/OR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. HE EMPHASIZED THE DESIRE OF THE UNION TO USE US CONSULTANTS IN THE PREPARATION OF THE HYDO-ELECTRICITY FEASIBILITY STUDIES, DUE TO US ADVANCES IN THIS AREA.
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